

Sunrises by **theamiableanachronism**

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Summary: Eleven can't sleep, meaning Mike doesn't either. The sun also rises.

Sunrises

Something woke Mike up.

The basement was completely silent, except for the quiet snores of Will, Dustin, and Lucas sprawled out across the floor in their sleeping bags and the crinkling of Mike's as he sat up to look around for whatever it was that had woken him up. He squinted across the room at the glaringly red digits of the alarm clock: 4:58 AM.

He frowned sleepily and turned around to check on El, asleep in her fort.

Except she wasn't asleep in her fort.

In fact, she wasn't in her fort at all.

Suddenly wide-awake, he scrambled out of his sleeping bag and leaped toward the stairs, nearly tripping over Lucas' sleeping form in the process. He'd made it halfway up the stairs before he felt the chill in the air. One foot hovering over the next step, he twisted to face the back door.

The slightly-open back door.

He crept back down the stairs and carefully picked his way over Dustin and Will. With one last over-the-shoulder glance to make sure he hadn't woken them, he opened the door the rest of the way.

A pre-dawn breeze ruffled his hair and he hugged himself for warmth. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, unless you counted the El-shaped spot in the darkness sitting on the grass, which he did. Relieved, he ducked inside to grab a blanket and then zoomed out, swinging the door closed behind him. It slammed shut and Mike cringed. Eleven's form stiffened and her head swiveled to the side, listening.

"It's just me, El," he whispered.

"Mike?" she whispered back, visibly relaxing at the sound of his familiar voice.

He closed the rest of the distance between them and sat down cross-legged next to her. "Yeah, it's me. Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you."

"You didn't scare me."

"Okay, good. I, uh, I brought a blanket." He draped the blanket across their shoulders and for a brief insane moment, considered leaving his arm around her shoulders. The idea was quickly dropped when his facial temperature increased by roughly 1000 degrees. He felt a rush of gratitude for the cover of darkness.

"It's freezing out here," he shivered.

The blanket shifted as El shrugged. "It's only fifty degrees. That's not freezing."

Mike grinned. "Touche, El," he chuckled. "But it's still cold," he countered with a gentle nudge.

They passed the next several minutes in silence, watching the morning light slowly reach across the sky and turn the heavy blackness into downy blue.

In the dim light, Mike glanced at El. Her eyes were bright and wide-awake, eagerly scanning the horizon, or as much of the horizon as could be seen above the silhouetted roofs and treetops.

"El, did... did you sleep at all?"

For a moment, she seemed almost frozen, the breeze gently stirring her short hair.

Then she calmly shook her head.

Mike smiled softly. El, ever the night-owl.

As the sky continued to lighten, the temperature dropped. Even with her sweatshirt, sweatpants, socks, AND the blanket, El scooted closer to Mike for warmth, drawing the corner of the blanket tighter around her shoulders as she did (strangely, Mike wasn't feeling very cold).

And then El sat up ramrod straight.

The air was still, the sky a pale blue, and there, just above the trees, was a faint golden glow. Not yet the sun, but rather its rays, testing the blue waters of the sky. Slowly, little by little, the sun made its gradual appearance.

Admittedly, Mike hadn't been paying complete attention, what with El sitting so close to him, but that little bit of attention was lost completely when El seized his hand and glanced at him with a dizzying elated smile.

Giving his head a slight shake, he wrapped his freezing fingers around her own and, with a steadying breath, had to remind himself that the sun was in front of him and not sitting next to him.

Although the real thing seemed awfully dim in comparison.